

Harbinger

SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2009 VOL 23 NO 5

With the onset of autumn, there comes a decline in ticks, chiggers, and pesky insects, much to the joy of those who enjoy the outdoors. But as you happily hike through a field or forest, your contentment might be rudely interrupted by a sharp prick on your legs or ankles. As you survey your pants and socks to determine the cause of your discomfort, you may discover an array of seed hitchhikers attached to your clothing, such as cocklebur or Spanish needles. You may also find beggar's lice (often called sticktight)

Traveling Seeds

covering your shoelaces and socks causing you great annoyance when you try to remove them.

Although you may find these hitchhiking seeds irritating, this is just one of the ingenious ways that nature has found to help plant populations expand. *Seed dispersal* is the process where seeds are carried from the parent plant to a different place. This is important because if seeds were to drop directly under the parent plant their chances of survival would be slim. However, seeds attached to our clothing or an animal's fur will be carried away from the parent plant and might eventually fall off in an area where the seed can germinate and grow, free from parental competition.

Seeds may also be transported through the digestive tracts of animals. Fleishy, sweet fruits and berries such as elderberries, gooseberries, blackberries, and cherries may be eaten by birds and other animals. The fleshy part is digested but the seeds pass through the intestines undamaged and then are deposited far away from the parent plant. Some seeds, such as pokeweed seeds, are unable to germinate unless they have passed through a bird's digestive tract.

Other ways that seeds move around are by wind, water, and mechanical means. Seeds carried by wind have several adaptations that help them float on wind currents including parachutes, cottony fibers, and wings. Two common plants with parachute-type seeds are dandelions

and milkweeds. Close inspection of a parachute seed head reveals an umbrella-like crown of hairs above a single seed. Parachute-type seeds probably travel the furthest of all wind-dispersed seeds.

Seeds with cottony fibers include plants in the willow, cottonwood, primrose, cattail, and sycamore families. Their seeds and fruit typically have tiny seed capsules with tufts of cottony hairs at one end or seeds embedded in a cottony mass. Although dispersed by wind, they probably don't float as far as parachute seeds.

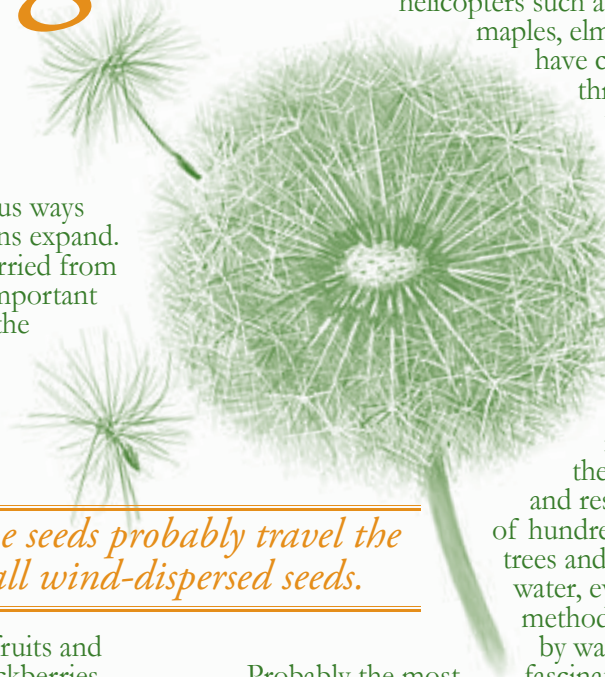
Samaras are winged seeds and include the gliders and helicopters such as those found on maples, elms, and ashes. You may have childhood memories of throwing maple seeds into the air and then watching as they fluttered gently to the ground, the single wing resembling a rotating helicopter blade.

Seeds may also travel by water. Evidence of this could be seen at the nature center after floodwaters deposited many sycamore seeds in the field several years ago and resulted in the sprouting of hundreds of seedlings. Other trees and plants that live by the water, even if their main dispersal method is wind, will often travel by water too.

Probably the most fascinating seed dispersal is the "shooting" mechanism that some plants have developed. A good example of this dispersal method is from jewelweeds, also known as touch-me-nots. Touching their seed pods at a certain time of ripeness will cause the seed pods to explode, throwing the seeds in every direction!

As you are enjoying the outdoors this fall, try to notice the different types of seed pods and fruits that are around. Examine their interesting textures, shapes, and colors. And when you feel irritated as you're pulling sticktight off of your socks, try to appreciate that you are one of nature's many tools that help seeds travel.

Parachute-type seeds probably travel the furthest of all wind-dispersed seeds.



The View From The Bridge

Landscaping with native plants is often the best choice for your yard. First of all, native plants have been around for ages so they are well adapted to Missouri's soils, climate, and wildlife. Native plants maintain natural diversity and resist invasive species. They are noninvasive and typically don't crowd out other plants unlike many nonnative plants which tend to be aggressive. The biggest bonus is that they require less care in terms of applying herbicide or watering, which translates to less maintenance for you and a better alternative for the environment.

If you are interested in learning more about using native plants, stop by the nature center or the Conservation Department's Southwest Regional Office to pick up brochures on butterfly gardening or growing native plants. Visit www.grownative.org for additional information or for a list of nurseries which sell native plants and seeds. Also, make plans to attend the *Fall Native Plant Sale* at the nature center on Saturday, September 5, from 9am-3pm. Visit with experts and purchase plants from Hamilton Native Outpost, Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, Bluebird Lane Wildflowers, and Pans Garden.

The Missouri Native Plant Society (MONPS)—an organization whose mission is to promote native plants—is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. While there is a great deal of interest in native plants in the Springfield area, there is no local chapter. There are six chapters across the state that typically hold monthly meetings and take guided field trips to learn more about native plants. The members also help with native plant restoration projects, participate in plant salvages to transplant native plants that would otherwise be destroyed during development of roads and subdivisions, assist with exotic pest control, and help monitor natural areas and rare plant species. Members include botanists from the Missouri Department of Conservation, major universities, and from the Missouri Botanical Garden, as well as many casual plant enthusiasts who would like to learn more.

If you would be interested in participating in a local MONPS chapter, contact Larry Wegmann at lwegmann@sbcglobal.net and leave your name, address, and phone number. If sufficient interest is present, you'll be invited to a meeting to begin planning a local chapter. If you'd like to learn more about the MONPS or about their 30th anniversary on September 25-27, visit www.missourinativeplantsociety.org.

So whether you want to transform your yard into a colorful showplace to appeal to both humans and wildlife or you simply want to help maintain native plant populations, using native plants is a natural.

Linda
Linda F. Chorce
Nature Center Manager

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 www.mdc.mo.gov/2360

The Nature Nook Gift Shop

20% Off

SEPTEMBER
AND
OCTOBER
Featured
Publication



Discounted price: \$6 plus tax

Heritage card discount does not apply.

Temporary Display

September

Insect and Natural History Photography

by Photographer and Entomologist
Dr. Tom Riley

October

Crab Spiders and Their Relatives

by Photographer and
Volunteer Naturalist Bob Ball



For the latest update on the 60/65 interchange construction, visit www.6065interchange.org or call 895-7600. You can sign up to receive weekly updates regarding highway construction and trail closures on the Galloway Creek Greenway.

ASK The Naturalist



Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

Can I collect seeds from conservation areas?

The Wildlife Code permits collecting nuts, berries, fruits, edible wild greens, and mushrooms from conservation areas for personal consumption only but prohibits collecting these materials at conservation nature centers.

I want to plant a tree. What should I know?

You need to consider several facts before you make your selection. Determine how much space you have, the amount of sunlight the tree will receive, and the type of soil in your yard. For example, Eastern redbud grows well in urban areas and tolerates poor soils if they are well-drained. Detailed information on selecting the right tree can be obtained at the nature center.

Can I dig wildflowers to transplant into my garden?

State law prohibits digging plants from highway rights-of-way. Collecting is also illegal in state parks, national forests, conservation areas, and nature centers. However, if you want to grow Missouri native wildflowers in your garden, collect only seeds from the wild where allowed because transplanting entire plants is usually unsuccessful. It is best to collect plant seeds from populations near your intended planting locations since they are better adapted to local soil and climate conditions. Native plants and seeds can be purchased from many nurseries. For more information, visit <www.grownative.org>.

Chipping In . . . Volunteer Naturalist Jill Daniels

Fast Facts:

Volunteer Class of 2005

Hours Donated: 575 hours

Occupation: kindergarten teacher at Wilder Elementary

Education: B.S. in elementary education from Missouri State University and a master in early childhood from University of Missouri-St. Louis

Nature Center Activities: working the front desk, patrolling trails, and assisting with programs including helping husband, Art, teach nature photography classes.



I volunteer because: it's a great community of staff and volunteers to work with. I was introduced to nature at a young age; therefore, I like to share nature with children. To paraphrase author and naturalist Rachel Carson, a child needs the companionship of at least one adult to share nature with, and everyone here helps fill that role.

The most fulfilling part of working as a Volunteer Naturalist is: seeing one of my students go on a field trip to the nature center for the first time, and then later have them tell me that they went back to "that nature place" with their family.

One thing most people don't know about me is: that I went to college on a field hockey scholarship as a goalie, and that I take a few nature pictures too!

When I was young, a natural experience that influenced me was: camping every summer with my family. We camped at many Missouri state parks, national parks, and even camped at the World's Fair in Canada.

I am inspired by: people and parents who let kids experience nature and the outdoors. I was lucky to have parents who let us play outside until dark, play on sports teams, and get out in nature on weekends to camp, swim, hike, and canoe.

One place where I have always wanted to go is: Ireland and Alaska.

My favorite volunteer memory occurs: at every *Eagle Days* event. I am still amazed every time I see a bald eagle, and it's exciting to share that same experience with adults and kids at the spotting scopes along Lake Springfield. I also once saw an eagle catch a fish during one of these events.

My favorite natural place to visit in Missouri is: the Jack's Fork and Current Rivers.

When I am not volunteering, you can find me: teaching kindergarten, canoeing, kayaking, or visiting family in St. Louis or Florida.

Thank You

We would like to thank Reba Perry, Keith Hammett, Wendell Jeffery, Ricky Ashford, Camie Free, and Del Viebrock for their donation of natural objects.

Volunteer Milestones

Sandy Corby 3500 Hours
Doug Gilliam 1250 Hours
Steve Craig 1000 Hours
Mary Ann Bratton 400 Hours
Jamie Schmitt 100 Hours



Halloween Happening

Little Red Riding Hood's Forest Foray

Thursday, October 29
or Friday, October 30
6:30-9:30pm

Our Halloween-style look at conservation returns. Join Little Red Riding Hood as she faces her fear of the dark and learns some important lessons about how animals survive in the dark. Guided hikes will be led on a first-come, first-served basis with the last hike leaving at 9pm. This guided hike is guaranteed to be insightful, not frightful! All ages. No registration required.

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Missouri Department of Conservation
4600 South Chrisman
Springfield, MO 65804-4931
Phone 417/888-4237
Fax: 417/888-4241



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after September 1 to register for September programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

5 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9–11am

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. All ages.



Fall Native Plant Sale

Saturday, 9am–3pm

Here's a great chance to get your flower beds ready for spring! Drop by anytime to purchase native plants from Hamilton Native Outpost, Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, Bluebird Lane Wildflowers, and Pans Garden.

For Adults Only: Wade Fishing

Saturday, 9am–3pm

You don't need fancy boats to enjoy fishing. Come find out how exciting and simple wade fishing can be. An Ozark stream is sure to yield plenty of feisty smallmouth bass and bluegill. Fishing equipment will be provided or you may bring your own. A valid Missouri fishing permit is required. Bring a sack lunch and water and dress to get wet. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

9 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Linda Brown as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

Summer Hummers

Wednesday, 6–7:30pm

Here's a last chance send-off for the ruby-throated hummingbirds as they head for Mexico. Hummingbird bander Sarah Driver will share her knowledge about these tiny birds and attempt to capture and band some. All ages. Registration required.

11 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

12 The Art Of Woodcarving

Saturday, 10–11am

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

Woodcarving Demonstration

Saturday, 10am–4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces. All ages.

Monarchs Rule!

Saturday, 1–3:30pm

Every fall millions of monarch butterflies wing over the Ozarks to their winter home in Mexico. Join Volunteer Naturalists Bob and Ruby Ball for an indoor/outdoor adventure to explore the fascinating behavior and life cycle of these beautiful travelers. Ages 5–adult. Registration required.

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month. Registration required.

Who's Awake When You're Asleep?

Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan as she dispels any “jitters” children might have about nighttime “critters.” Kids will learn about some creatures of the night and discover that nighttime can be neat!

Friday, September 11, 11am or 1pm

Hey! Big Daddy

Hey! Who is hurrying, scurrying, and weaving in and out of the leaf litter? It's Big Daddy Longlegs! Hurry in to find out some amazing facts about these long-legged forest creatures.

Saturday, September 19, 11am

Tuesday, September 29, 11am or 1:30pm

Sensational Seeds

Bring your little “sprout” and find out what seeds need to travel, get planted, and grow.

Wednesday, September 23,
11am or 1:30pm

13 Woodcarving Demonstration

Sunday, 1–4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces. All ages.

Discover Nature Families Nature Photography

Sunday, 1–4pm

**DISCOVER
nature
FAMILIES**

Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn nature photography together. We will start in the classroom with Volunteer Naturalist Bob Ball to learn the basics of nature photography followed by a hands-on photo session outside. Bring a digital or 35mm camera. Each family will receive a book to put together a pictorial journal of the digital photos that they have taken. Ages 8–adult. Registration required.



at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area

Saturday, September 26, 8:30am to 4pm

Attention, Scout and Group Leaders and Parents:

Your scouts and other groups can have fun while satisfying certain badge/achievement requirements at the Great Outdoors Day event. Call the nature center to receive a flier.

17 Nature And The Arts Natural History Photography The Stories Behind The Pictures

Thursday, 7–8:30pm

Photographer and Entomologist Dr. Tom Riley returns to present the first program in this season of *Nature And The Arts*. He'll share some of his favorite and most striking photographic compositions of insects and reptiles that both nature enthusiasts and photographers will find appealing. His presentation will be illustrated by his stunning photography and colorfully narrated to both entertain and inform about the ecology and behavior of his subjects as well as his creative and technical photographic processes. Ages 15–adult. Registration required.

19 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm

Join Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam for a hike at Hercules Glade Wilderness. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and of moderate difficulty. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Intermediate Photography

Saturday, 9am–Noon

This course covers both 35mm and digital photography using nature as the primary subject. The workshop includes a lecture by Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels and a photography session in the field. Bring your camera, film, lenses, and a tripod. Ages 15–adult. Registration required.

Conservation TEEN Club: Caving

Saturday, 1–5pm

Beat the heat with an underground retreat! We'll be touring Breakdown Cave with guide Charity Hertzler of the Springfield Plateau Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Bring two flashlights with fresh batteries and wear boots with good traction and clothes you can get muddy. Transportation will be provided. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

22 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Autumn

Tuesday, 11–11:45am or 6–6:45pm

Introduce your favorite 0–2 year old to the wonders of the first day of autumn. Bring a stroller and join the fun. Registration required.

Primitive Skills Series

Backpacking For Beginners

Tuesday, 7–9pm

Join avid outdoorsmen Volunteer Specialist Don Brink and special guest Richard Donaldson for an introduction to backpacking. Learn about the types of equipment, things beginners should know, and places to go in the Ozarks. After attending this program, you'll be ready to venture out on your own. Ages 10–adult. Registration required.

29 Conservation Kids' Club Snakes Up Close

Tuesday, 6:30–7:45pm

While the mere thought of a snake may make parents shudder, kids love them. Come to this month's meeting to learn all the fun facts about Missouri's most misunderstood reptile. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN EVERY
SUNDAY FROM 2-3PM.

OCTOBER EVENTS

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after October 1 to register for October programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

3 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9–11am

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. All ages.



4 Primitive Skills Day

Sunday, 1–5pm

Back by popular demand, Primitive Skills Day returns! See demonstrations in flint knapping, bow and arrow construction, making cordage out of plant fibers, beadwork, and fire making from some of the Ozarks best primitive skills specialists. Try your hand at some of these age-old skills. All ages. Drop by anytime.

6 Bat Chat

Tuesday, 7–8pm

Ravenous. Rabid. Bloodsuckers. These words are often used to describe bats, but are they accurate? Join us as we shed some light on these nocturnal animals. All ages. Registration required.

8 Conserving Missouri's Amphibians And Reptiles

Thursday, 7–8:30pm

Conservation Department herpetologist Jeff Briggler makes a guest appearance to share information about the latest amphibian and reptile research projects in southwest Missouri. Learn about the current status of the Ozark hellbender, the latest news about the Chytrid fungus which is creating havoc in the amphibian world, and how you can lend a hand. This program is cosponsored by the Southwest Missouri Herpetological Society. Participants are also invited to attend the group's meeting following the program. Ages 12–adult. *Registration begins September 15.*

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month. Registration required.

Nighttime Creatures

Are nighttime animals really so spooky? A lot of people think so! We'll shed light on some creatures of the dark and you might see that they're not so spooky after all.

Tuesday, October 6, 11am or 1:30pm

Bear Tales

The black bear population is increasing across southwest Missouri. These interesting animals represent all things that are wild in the Ozarks. Join us for a wonderful time as we learn about these amazing animals.

Tuesday, October 13, 11am or 1:30pm
Saturday, October 17, 11am

Get A Bat Attitude

Go batty with Volunteer Naturalist Michele Skalicky and learn why humans need bats, why bats need friends, and why bats need friends like you!

Friday, October 23, 1pm
Saturday, October 24, 11am

9 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

10 For Adults Only: Hiking

Saturday, 9am–5pm

Enjoy the crisp air of fall and join us for a four-mile hike at Lead Mine Conservation Area. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is rated moderate to difficult. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

11 Discover Nature Women Archery For Beginners

Sunday, 12:30–2:30pm



You don't have to be a hunter to become a skilled archer. Learn a new skill and spend time practicing at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range at the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. No experience is necessary. Meet at the range. Archery equipment will be provided. This program is for women only. Girls, ages 14–17, are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult female. Registration required.

Discover Nature Families Archery For Beginners

Sunday, 2:30–4:30pm



Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. Have you ever wanted to get started in archery but didn't know where to begin? Archery is a great family sport. Learn about archery equipment, shooting safety, and proper shooting techniques. Meet at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range at the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. Archery equipment will be provided. Ages 10–adult. Registration required.

13 Missouri's Black Bears

Tuesday, 7–8pm

Encountering a black bear in Missouri has become more common in recent years. These large mammals, once gone from the state, have created lots of questions with their return. Conservation Department Wildlife Damage Biologist James Dixon shares the latest news along with information about how to avoid unpleasant encounters with black bears. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

Newsletter Online . . .

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to receive the newsletter online. If you'd like to start receiving your newsletter through the web, sign up at <www.mdc.mo.gov/2360>.

14 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

15 Babes In The Woods

Thursday, 11–11:45am or 6–6:45pm

Join us for a guided nature stroll. Bring your 0–2 year old and a stroller to enjoy the beauty of a crisp, colorful autumn day. Registration required.

Cougars In Missouri

Thursday, 7–8pm

Reports of a few mountain lion sightings in Missouri have been confirmed in recent years. These large predators, once gone from Missouri, are creating lots of excitement—both positive and negative—with their appearances. Conservation Department Wildlife Damage Biologist James Dixon returns to share biological information about cougars and to separate fact from fiction about these fascinating large cats. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

17 Conservation TEEN Club Shooting 22s

Saturday, 1:30–4:30pm

Come out to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range at the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area and learn how to shoot 22-caliber rifles. We will spend time in the classroom and then it is out to the range to practice and test our skills. So whether you're a beginner or an expert shot, meet at the range and enjoy the fun! Refreshments will be provided. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

24 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm

View autumn colors on this late October hike with Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam at Little Sac Woods Conservation Area. Hike is four miles and easy to moderate in difficulty. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Close-Up Nature Photography

Saturday, 9am–Noon

Take a closer look at nature with Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels to learn the techniques and equipment used for macro photography. Bring a 35mm or digital SLR camera, tripod, and any close-up equipment you have. Ages 15–adult. Registration required.

29 Halloween Happening 30 Little Red Riding Hood's Forest Foray

Thursday or Friday, 6:30–9:30pm

Our Halloween-style look at conservation returns. Join Little Red Riding Hood as she faces her fear of the dark and learns some important lessons about how animals survive in the dark. Guided hikes will be led on a first-come, first-served basis with the last hike leaving at 9pm. This guided hike is guaranteed to be insightful, not frightful! All ages.